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Prime Minister's schedule, 13 & 14

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
July 15, 2008

July 13

Spent the whole day in his official residence.

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July 14

10:04

Met at Kantei with Agriculture Minister Wakabayashi and Agriculture Vice Minister for International Affairs Murakami, followed by Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Futahashi and Assistant Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Saka. Futahashi remained.

11:24

Met with Deputy Foreign Minister Kono and Defense Ministry Defense Policy Bureau chief Takamizawa.

11:40

Handed written official appointment to Mitsui Bussan's advisor Aihara as member of the Japanese side of the APEC Business Council, joined by Foreign Ministry Economic Affairs Bureau chief Otabe and METI Trade Policy Bureau chief Ishige.

12:01

Attended government-ruling coalition meeting.

14:40

Met with Special Advisor Ito.

15:01

Attended monthly economic report-connected meeting. Met with Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura. Met afterwards with Foreign Ministry Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau chief Saiki.

16:02

Returned to his official residence.

17:23

Had photo session with Chinese Ambassador Cui Tiankai at Edo Tokyo Museum.

18:16

Held informal meeting with reporters assigned to Kantei at okonomiyaki restaurant Matsunami in Nihonbashi-Ningyocho.

20:41

Returned to his official residence.

4) Fuji-Sankei poll: Fukuda cabinet support rate reaches its lowest at 21.7 PERCENT, with no boost coming from the G-8 Summit; Public dissatisfied with Prime Minister's leadership

SANKEI (Page 3) (Abridged)
July 15, 2008

In a public opinion survey carried out jointly by the Sankei Shimbun and the Fuji-Sankei Network on July 12-13, the support rate for the Fukuda Cabinet, which was 22 PERCENT in the last poll (June 14-15), slipped 0.3 point to 21.7 PERCENT, the lowest rating (in this series). The non-support rate, too, stayed high at over 60 PERCENT,

recording 61.2 PERCENT . Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda had hoped that the G-8 Summit held at Lake Toya in Hokkaido would bring about a recovery of his support rate, but many people saw the Prime Minister there as lacking in leadership, and so were disappointed.

Among the questions on the results of the G-8 Summit, the reply to the one on the shared target of halving greenhouse-gas emissions by 2050, found a majority or 52.5 PERCENT evaluating it positively.

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However, on the abductions issue having been included in the leaders statement, 47.7 were unappreciative, far more than 36.5 PERCENT who positively evaluated the move. The reason for the dissatisfaction seems to be that even though the abduction issue was mentioned for the first time in the leaders' statement, it and the North Korea nuclear issue were referred to with a few words.

On the question of Fukuda's leadership at the G-8 Summit, only 19.9 PERCENT have him high marks, while about 70 PERCENT (69.9 PERCENT) did not appreciate his performance. About 80 PERCENT (79.6 PERCENT) gave the Prime Minister low marks for leadership in running his administration. Only 10.7 PERCENT said they appreciated his leadership. The public's disgruntlement toward the Prime Minister's lack of leadership indeed is deep-seated.

Regarding party support rates, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) for the first time (in this series) outweighs the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). In the survey, the support rate for the DPJ rose 4.4 points to 29.0 PERCENT , while that of the LDP slipped 1 point to 23.0 PERCENT . The gap has widened to six points. The trend of the DPJ's support rate outpacing that of the LDP has strengthened, bringing about a sense of alarm in the ruling camp toward the next Lower House election.

5) Poll: Cabinet support remains low at 24 PERCENT

ASAHI (Page 1) (Abridged)
July 15, 2008

The Asahi Shimbun conducted a telephone-based nationwide public opinion survey on July 12-13, in which the rate of public support for Prime Minister Fukuda's cabinet remained low at 24 PERCENT (23 PERCENT in the 4 last survey taken June 14-15). The Fukuda cabinet's support rate has been below 30 PERCENT since April. The nonsupport rate was 58 PERCENT (59 PERCENT in the last survey). In the survey, only 24 PERCENT answered "yes" and 60 PERCENT said "no" when asked if Fukuda had displayed leadership as the host of the Group of Eight (G-8) summit held at Lake Toya in Hokkaido. The G-8 summit does not seem to have given any boost to the Fukuda administration.

The G-8 leaders decided at the summit to call on the world to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and they also agreed to share the goal without setting a numerical benchmark. In the survey, respondents were also asked if they had appreciated this result. In response, "no" accounted for 53 PERCENT , and "yes" was at 32 PERCENT . China, India, and other newly emerging countries insisted that advanced countries should first reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Asked if this standpoint was convincing, 37 PERCENT answered "yes," with 50 PERCENT saying "no."

Meanwhile, the United States is now in the process of delisting North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism. In the survey, respondents were asked if they appreciated this. To this question, "yes" accounted for only 17 PERCENT , with "no" reaching 71 PERCENT . Asked how this move for delisting would affect a solution to the issue of Japanese nationals abducted to North Korea, 51 PERCENT were concerned about a "bad impact," with 30 PERCENT saying there would be "no impact" and 4 PERCENT saying there would be a "good impact."

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the ruling

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Liberal Democratic Party stood at 26 PERCENT (22 PERCENT in the last survey), with the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) at 24 PERCENT (22 PERCENT in the last survey). The LDP outstripped the DPJ for the first time since April.

6) Poll: Cabinet support up slightly to 27 PERCENT

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)
July 15, 2008

The Yomiuri Shimbun conducted a face-to-face nationwide public opinion survey on July 12-13, in which the rate of public support for Prime Minister Fukuda's cabinet was 26.6 PERCENT, showing a slight increase of 1.5 percentage points from last month. Meanwhile, the nonsupport rate was 61.3 PERCENT, showing a decrease of 2.1 points from last month. The Fukuda cabinet's support rate, which was on the decline in the January and following surveys, stopped dropping for the time being.

Fukuda hosted the recent Group of Eight (G-8) summit held at Lake Toya in Hokkaido, expecting it to boost his administration. In the survey, however, 44 PERCENT answered "yes" and 52 PERCENT said "no" when were asked if they appreciated the G-8 summit. The event does not seem to have boosted the Fukuda cabinet's support rate, which remains below 30 PERCENT.

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party stood at 27.2 PERCENT, up 1.2 points from last month, with the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) at 18.8 PERCENT, down 1.7 points from last month. The DPJ, though squaring off with the Fukuda administration, remains unable to expand its public support.

Respondents were also asked which political party they will vote for in their proportional representation blocs if and when there is an election for the House of Representatives. To this question, however, the DPJ outstripped the LDP, with the DPJ scoring 27 PERCENT (down 1.0 points from last month) and the LDP at 26 PERCENT (up 1.0 points from last month). The DPJ was above the LDP in the latest survey, following the survey taken last month.

7) Poll: 27 PERCENT see Fukuda as displaying leadership at G-8 summit; Cabinet support level at 22 PERCENT

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Abridged)
July 15, 2008

The Mainichi Shimbun conducted a telephone-based nationwide public opinion survey on July 12-13. The rate of public support for Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's cabinet was 22 PERCENT, up 1.0 points from the last survey taken in June. Fukuda hosted the recent Group of Eight (G-8) summit that at Lake Toya in Hokkaido on July 6-9. In the survey, when respondents were asked if they thought Fukuda displayed leadership, 62 PERCENT answered "no," with 27 PERCENT saying "yes." Respondents were also asked if their evaluation of Fukuda changed after the G-8 summit. In response, 83 PERCENT answered "no." The figure shows that the G-8 summit does not seem to have boosted Fukuda's administration.

The Fukuda cabinet's support rate, which hit a low of 18 PERCENT in this May's survey, increased for the first time since the last survey and reached 21 PERCENT. The government and the ruling

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coalition expected a boost for the Fukuda administration, taking it that the support rate stopped dropping. However, the support rate was slightly up for the second time in a row. The nonsupport rate was 54 PERCENT, showing a decrease of 6.0 points from the last survey. Those not interested accounted for 21 PERCENT, up 4.0 points.

8) Poll: Cabinet support levels off

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Abridged)
July 13, 2008

The approval rating for the cabinet of Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda was 26.8 PERCENT in a public opinion survey conducted by Kyodo News across the nation on July 11-12 after the Group of Eight (G-8) summit held at Lake Toya in Hokkaido, leveling off from the 25.0 PERCENT rating in the last survey taken in June. The disapproval rating was 53.5 PERCENT, showing a decrease of 6.7 percentage points. In the survey, respondents were asked if they thought Fukuda had displayed leadership as the chair of the G-8 summit. In response to this question, 51.4 PERCENT answered "no," with 30.3 PERCENT saying "yes."

Fukuda's aides wanted the G-8 summit to give a boost to his administration. However, the survey did not show such an effect. The nonsupport rate also remains high, topping 50 PERCENT. Fukuda will still face difficulties in steering his government, including his decision whether to shuffle his cabinet.

In the survey, respondents were asked about the framework of government they would support. To this question, 45.3 PERCENT chose a coalition government centering on the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), up 4.9 points. Meanwhile, 31.2 PERCENT picked a coalition government centering on the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, down 3.9 points. The DPJ topped the LDP for the fourth time in a row. The gap between the two parties expanded from 5.3 points in the last survey to 14.1 points.

In the breakdown of public support, the LDP and the DPJ were on a par at 28.6 PERCENT. The LDP was down 0.5 points, with the DPJ up 5.0 points.

9) Asahi poll: Who is more appropriate to be prime minister? 37 PERCENT of public pick Fukuda, 28 PERCENT choose Ozawa; DPJ head Ozawa unpopular among unaffiliated voters

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
July 15, 2008

In a national opinion poll carried out (by telephone) July 12-13, the question was asked whether people found Prime Minister Fukuda or Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ozawa more appropriate to be premier. In the response, 37 PERCENT of the public chose Fukuda, while 28 PERCENT picked Ozawa. Fukuda was the favorite. However, 35 PERCENT of the respondents chose the answer, "other, can't answer."

Among the respondents to the question, 72 PERCENT of the supporters of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) chose Fukuda, and 59 PERCENT of the DPJ supporters picked Ozawa. Among the large numbers of unaffiliated voters, 31 PERCENT were for Fukuda, and 22 PERCENT were for Ozawa. That margin gave Fukuda the edge (in the overall

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number of 37 PERCENT).

Asked to evaluate Ozawa as president of the DPJ, 36 PERCENT answered that they "greatly evaluated" him or "evaluated him to a certain extent," while 61 PERCENT answered that they "did not evaluate him very much," or "did not evaluate him at all." Limited to the supporters of the DPJ, 66 PERCENT evaluated him, while 33 PERCENT did not.

10) Six-party talks: Japan faces isolation due to its refusal to provide assistance to North Korea; South Korea expresses disgruntlement

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
July 12, 2008

Beijing, Yoshiharu Asano, Yuji Anai

Akitaka Saiki, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, at a meeting of chief delegates to the

six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program held on July 11 explained Japan's stand: "Since there has been no tangible progress on relations between Japan and North Korea, including the abduction cases, the situation is not yet conducive to allow us to extend energy assistance to that nation. Japan is ready to join assistance activities carried out by other nations as soon as possible, provided that concrete progress has been made." However, Japan is having difficulty dealing with the situation with other member nations increasingly expressing their dissatisfaction with it.

According to a government source, the top U.S. envoy reportedly made a statement showing understanding toward Japan's stance of attaching importance to the abduction issue, saying, "The abduction issue is a major issue. We hope North Korea will deal with the matter swiftly." A Chinese delegate also reportedly noted, "We hope that North Korea will seriously respond to Japan's concern."

On the other hand, referring to Japan's decision not to take part in energy assistance to North Korea because of the unsettled abduction issue, South Korea's top envoy Kim Sook, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs of the Foreign Affairs and Trade, during a press conference held after the chief envoys' meeting pointed out, "The U.S., South Korea, China and Russia are not all convinced by Japan's stance." He sought Japan's participation in the assistance activities.

11) Takeshima for first time mentioned in teachers manual for middle school curriculum guidelines: Difference in stances of Japan, South Korea described

ASAHI (Top Play) (Excerpts)
July 15, 2008

The government on July 14 released a teachers manual for middle school curriculum guidelines, which for the first time refers to the Takeshima group of islets (known as Dokdo by South Korea), which both Japan and South Korea claim. The manual does not use words "an integral part of Japan" in referring to the islets, consideration having been given to South Korea. However, the reaction from South Korea has been strong.

The government was supposed to write a new manual this month before

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the work of writing new school textbooks starts in fiscal 2009, following the amendment to school curriculum guidelines in March. At present, three out of six textbooks of geography and three out of eight civics textbooks describe the Takeshima islets. It is viewed that many more textbooks will mention the Takeshima islets in 2012, when the use of textbooks written based on the new school curriculum starts, as a result of the release of the manual this time.

Regarding the Northern Territories issue, the manual mentions that it is necessary (for school textbooks) to properly deal with the fact that Japan is seeking the return of the islands from Russia. This time, for the first time the words are included: "It is important (for teachers) to deepen students' understanding of our country's territories as in the case of the Northern Territories, by referring to a difference in the stances of Japan and South Korea over the Takeshima islets."

The manual mentions that the Northern Territories are an integral part of Japan. By mentioning that the Takeshima islets should be treated similar to the Northern Territories issue, the manual encourages teachers to indirectly tell students that the Takeshima islets are an integral part of Japan.

Though South Korean President Lee Myung-bak had expressed a grave concern about the matter, the government has stood firm on the description of the Takeshima islets. However, it has given maximum consideration to South Korea, by referring to a difference in the stances of the two countries over the islets and adding new words "illegally occupied" only to the description of the Northern Territories issue.

12) South Korean government "deeply disappointed": Ambassador to Japan to be recalled

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)
July 15, 2008

Following the Japanese government's decision to include the Takeshima islets in a manual for school curriculum guidelines for middle schools, the South Korean President's Office on July 14 released President Lee Myung-bak's comment expressing deep disappointment and regret at the Japanese government's decision in view of the agreement reached at the bilateral summit to pursue a future-oriented partnership.

Lee then ordered a strict and resolute measure. Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Yu Myung-hwan on July 14 summoned Ambassador to South Korea Toshinori Shigeie to the Foreign Ministry to lodge a protest. He sought the removal of the description. South Korean Ambassador to Japan Kwon Chul Hyun will file a protest with Foreign Minister Koumura on the 15th and temporarily return home the same day.

The South Korean government will decide what to do about the resumption of summit diplomacy, which both countries have agreed on, and whether to change other diplomatic schedules, after determining the Japanese government's response and moves in public opinion in the nation.

The ROK Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs on July 14 released a Dokdo Utilization Implementation Program totaling 8.4 billion won (approximately 900 million yen) covering 14 items in five areas in order to strengthen the nation's control of the

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islets.

In the meantime, senior officials of the ruling Grand National Party and the opposition Democratic Party on the morning of the same day landed at Takeshima and encouraged coast-guard personnel there. Voices criticizing Japan are growing in South Korea.

13) 30,000 protest against US aircraft carrier deployment to Yokosuka

AKAHATA (Top Play) (Full)
July 15, 2008

Under the blazing sun on July 13, more than 30,000 people gathered at the Verny Park in Yokosuka City, from which people can see U.S. Yokosuka Naval Base. They held placards stating: "No aircraft carrier," and "I Love Peace." The 7/13 National Large Rally in Yokosuka was held at the grass-roots level to protest the deployment of a U.S. aircraft carrier and the realignment and reinforcement of U.S. naval base, the aim of being to place the government in a difficult position.

Katsutoshi Nakai, 22, of the Kanagawa Civil Engineering Yokosuka Miura branch, said: "Meeting a lot of participants, I felt close ties to people across the nation. Yokosuka will do its best." Nakai and his group's members held up about 70 plastic umbrellas reading, "The purpose of the aircraft carrier is not to protect Japan."

Kazumi Shibahara, 55, a resident of Ishikawa Prefecture, in which the Self-Defense Forces' (SDF) Komatsu base is shared by U.S. forces, enthusiastically said: "I want to prevent Yokosuka from becoming a front line base, which would be involved in America's war. I came here to join with others protesting the deployment of the U.S. nuclear carrier."

Mitsuo Sakauchi, chairman of the National confederation of Trade Unions, pointed out that the deployment of a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier is an affront to the people of a country that suffered from atomic bombs, as well as to the democratic rights of Yokosuka residents. In order to strengthen nationwide cooperation, he called on the participants to put a halt to the realignment and reinforcement of U.S. forces in Japan. The participants responded by

chanting: "Yes!"

After the gathering, the demonstrators marched through the city and protested in front of the gate of the U.S. base.

14) Government likely to use P-3C patrol planes in assistance for Afghanistan in consideration of New Komeito's concerns

SANKEI (Page 3) (Excerpts)
July 12, 2008

The government began considering on July 11 adding patrol activities to the Maritime Self-Defense Force's operation in the Indian Ocean as part of Japan's assistance to Afghanistan, which is certain to take center stage in the extraordinary Diet session expected to open in late August. Coordination is underway to add the step to the MSDF's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean in amending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which is scheduled to expire next January.

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Although the government is also considering using Ground Self-Defense Force helicopters and Air Self-Defense Force transport planes to airlift supplies, the New Komeito, the LDP's coalition partner, is reluctant to agree to using such means. The government is endeavoring to bridge the gap with the New Komeito in order to make a final decision on contents of aid in early August.

According to a government source, the Defense Ministry considered the contents of assistance by the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces after receiving a report by the government's fact-finding team that stayed in Afghanistan from June 8 through 18.

As a result, a plan has emerged to use the GSDFs' CH-47 helicopters to airlift personnel and supplies from Bagram Air Base near Afghanistan's capital of Kabul to the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF) hub airport up in the north. The ASDF will carry out transport activities between Bagram Air Base and a U.S. base in Tajikistan using C-130s. A plan has remained to use the MSDF's P-3Cs to carry out patrol activities in the skies over the Diego Garcia-Oman-Djibouti triangle in the Indian Ocean.

The fact-finding team's results showed a great need for ground assistance in the unstable southern part of the country. At the same time, the relatively stable northern part is also in need of CH-47 helicopters. A Defense Ministry source has described the northern part as the safest area where the GSDF can carry out activities.

But concerned about the safety of SDF personnel and the possible use of force, which is prohibited under the Constitution, the New Komeito has reacted negatively to this plan. The party has shown the same reaction to using the ASDF's C-130s to airlift supplies. In the event the MSDF's P-3C patrol plane finds a suspicious vessel, it would report it to the U.S. military for action by multinational force vessels. In terms of safety, this makes it easier to obtain understanding.

15) Details unveiled of 13 attacks on GSDF camp in Samawah, with 22 shells landing, exposing danger of "noncombat area"

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top Play) (Excerpts)
July 13, 2008

The details of 13 mortar and rocket attacks on the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) camp in Samawah, Iraq, have been disclosed through the data of the Joint Staff Office obtained by the Tokyo Shimbun. Of the shells fired, 22 landed, with four falling on the site of the camp and 14 dropping within one kilometer from the camp. July 16 marks the second anniversary of SDF troops having left Iraq. The data show how dangerous the government-claimed "noncombat area" was.

A rocket shell dropped on the SDF camp on Oct. 22, 2004, for the

first time. After that, three more rocket shells landed on the site in a series of attacks, indicating that the shooters were expert at handling weapons.

A shell fired Oct. 31 the same year went through a container on the west side of the camp. At that time, tents were being used as troops' quarters. In response to growing calls for strengthened defense measures, the GSDF established concrete quarters, taking more than one year.

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The shells were all fired from somewhere near a housing district north of the camp. The attackers disappeared into the darkness immediately after firing, so their motives remain unknown. Former GSDF Chief of Staff Hajime Massaki, now advisor to the Defense Ministry, said: "Since there were no intensive attacks, it is inconceivable that the shooters' aim was to have the SDF withdraw from Iraq. It is highly likely that the attacks were made by a tribe dissatisfied at having been unable to get jobs at the camp."

A senior Joint Staff Office member remarked: "Japan constructed hospitals in 13 locations in Iraq with official development assistance. Iraqi people placed excessive expectations on the SDF, but what they could do were limited. I think people's frustration against Japan's reconstruction aid exploded."

The 13 attacks with 22 shells were more critical than expected. SDF troops, while reinforcing defense, tried to establish a friendly relationship with local residents by proactively mingling with them. Small projects were also carried out with grassroots grant aid under the jurisdiction of the Foreign Ministry in an effort to prevent attacks.

16) Final draft of Defense Ministry reform calls for integrating internal bureaus and SDF staff offices

MAINICHI (Top Play) (Excerpts)
Evening, July 12, 2008

The government's council on Defense Ministry reform, chaired by Tokyo Electric Power Co. Advisor Naoya Minami, outlined its final report today. The report includes measures to integrate and reorganize civilian personnel from internal bureaus and uniformed personnel from the Self-Defense Forces' (SDF) staff offices. By forming a mixed organization, the panel aims to reduce harmful influences from the traditional sectional rivalries. The panel will submit the final report to Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda on July 15.

It has been pointed out that a lack of cooperation between civilian personnel and uniformed personnel and their attitude of laying blame on the other side have led to a series of scandals. The final draft calls for maintaining in principle the current organization system with internal bureaus and the Joint, Ground, Maritime, and Air Staff Offices. But it proposes enabling uniformed personnel to assume up to the post of vice chief in internal bureaus, though such personnel are unable to assume a higher post than division director under the current system, as well as allowing civilian personnel to become vice president at joint offices, in a bid to strengthen cooperation between civilian personnel and uniformed personnel

Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba proposed integrating and reorganizing internal bureaus and each of the SDF's staff offices into three sections. But the Prime Minister's Office (Kantei) expressed concern about the proposal, with one official grumbling: "If SDF personnel are deeply involved in policymaking, problems might appear in terms of civilian control." Partially introducing the Ishiba proposal, the draft report comes up with the policy of promoting the establishment of a mixed organization.

On administrative work of units, the report suggests that the operation and planning bureau among the internal bureaus be disbanded and leave the task only in the hands of the unit operation

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section in the Joint Staff Office. However, the report specifies that the defense policymaking bureau will be tasked with policymaking for unit operations, giving consideration to the concern harbored by the Kantei.

17) LDP's Koga calls for cabinet shuffle

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
July 15, 2008

Appearing on a TV program on July 14, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Election Strategy Council Chairman Makoto Koga said that in order to narrow the economic disparities in society by correcting the structural reform policy line, the cabinet should be shuffled. He said: "We won't fight an election unless the Fukuda government makes clear its direction. To show the public a change in the administration's policy line from the Koizumi government's reform policy, there should be a cabinet shuffle."

Referring to the possibility of political realignment after the next House of Representatives election, Koga pointed out: "It is only natural that there will be political realignment. We should head in that direction."

18) Prime Minister Fukuda to take summer vacation from tomorrow

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
July 15, 2008

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda is expected to take summer vacation for six days from July 16 when he turns 72, until the 21st. Taking advantage of the six-day vacation, which he will take for the first time since assuming office, he intends to consider whether to shuffle his cabinet and how to handle his administration, including how to deal with the upcoming extraordinary Diet session, which will be convened as early as late August. Fukuda plans to spend the vacation in his official residence and private residence in Nozawa, Tokyo.

19) DPJ set to return to deliberations in extraordinary Diet session

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
July 12, 2008

The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) started final coordination yesterday to attend deliberations from the outset of the extraordinary Diet session to be convened in late August. The main opposition adopted a censure motion against Prime Minister Fukuda at the House of Councillors in the latest ordinary Diet session, with the aim of pressing the government to dissolve the House of Representatives for a snap election by boycotting deliberations. But the prime minister ignored it.

Keeping in mind the need to tackle such imminent tasks as skyrocketing oil prices, the DPJ has judged it would be more advantageous for it to grill the government in Diet deliberations.

In a press conference on July 10, Deputy President Naoto Kan referred to soaring oil prices: "It is necessary to determine in the extraordinary Diet session what response measures, including budgetary ones, should be taken." He said: "It is naturally possible

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for the party to present emergency economic measures to deal with rising oil prices in the form of law," premised on the party returning to Diet deliberations.

Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kenji Yamaoka said in a press conference on the 7th: "(In the ruling camp,) there are calls for taking up a supplementary budget to finance measures closely linked to people's livelihood, such as countermeasures against natural

disasters.

CEKUTA